

A Citizen's Guide to Land Use Planning



Prepared By a Volunteer Committee for All Citizens of Corvallis

**Corvallis Committee for Citizen Involvement
July 2001**

Published by the Corvallis Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI). The CCI is a volunteer citizen advisory committee with a mandate to help facilitate citizen involvement in the City's land use planning and decision making. The Committee meets monthly; all meetings are open to the public. Visitors are welcome and are encouraged to provide comments to the Committee. For more information about the CCI, contact the City of Corvallis Planning Division at (541) 766-6908 or go to the City's web site at: www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/pl/cci.html.

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The CCI wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Kevin Gillies for many of the ideas that resulted in the creation of this handbook.

This document is intended as a convenient reference guide to Corvallis' land use process. Changes to local regulations, State law, and case law will impact information in this guide. Information in this guide should not be construed as legal advice from the City of Corvallis. Individuals needing legal advice should consult their own attorney.

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Introduction - How to Use This Guide

All citizens are affected by how land is used in Corvallis. Land use planning helps guide and shape our community. There are many reasons why you may wish to become involved with land use planning issues. You may, for example, apply for a permit to build on your property, testify on a project proposed for your neighborhood, or help develop new land use policies. You might also participate on a City advisory committee or task force devoted to land use issues.

Your participation in land use planning at all levels is important and encouraged. City staff and decision makers need comments and ideas from those who know the community best: the people who live here. But land use issues can be complex. It may not be clear how and when to get involved.

Regardless of your interest, this guide will help you understand how to participate. The guide is organized as follows:



Tip: Key point to remember.



What Can You Do: Suggestions for Action.



Resource: Additional resources that may be useful (see also Resource list at the end of guide for further details).



Information: Additional information about City Codes, Policies, or Procedures.

Part I: The first part of the guide presents an example of a change impacting a neighborhood. Common questions about land use issues are addressed, along with some suggestions regarding how to get involved.

Part II: You may find you need more information after reading Part I. The second part of the guide describes local land use decision making processes in more detail.

Part III: Part III describes the State context for local land use programs and procedures.

Glossary and Resource List:

A glossary of terms and a list of additional informational resources are included at the end.

Don't feel that you need to read the entire guide at once! This guide is intended to be used as a reference. You can refer to different sections that interest you or as different needs arise.

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Part I: A Proposed Change to a Neighborhood



The Jacksons want to build a “granny flat” in their backyard.



Carol also wants to build a granny flat that she can rent for some extra income.



Don is not sure what the City’s notice means, and has several questions he needs answered.

Individuals often become involved with land use issues when a development is proposed that affects them personally. The following story describes some of the possible perspectives on such a situation.

Paul and Anna Jackson want to build a “granny flat” in their backyard to provide a home for Anna’s elderly parents. They are excited about having their extended family close to them.

The Jacksons met with a city planner to find out what requirements would apply. They learned that the City’s zoning ordinance allows granny flats in all residential zoning districts, as long as certain development standards are met. However, because of their lot configuration, they will not be able to meet the rear yard setback requirement that applies to their zone. They found out that they can apply for something called a “lot development option” (LDO) which could allow them to reduce their rear yard setback. The City could approve the LDO permit if specific criteria outlined in the zoning ordinance are met. The City would notify adjacent property owners about the request before making a decision.

The Jacksons weighed their options and decided to apply for the lot development option. They spoke with several of their neighbors and have received mixed responses...

Carol lives across the street from the Jacksons and thinks their proposal is a great idea. In fact, Carol also wants to build a granny flat that she can rent for some extra income.

Don received the notice about the proposed lot development option in the mail. He doesn’t know what a lot development option is and he is not sure what the City’s notice means. He has several questions he needs answered.

Susan feels threatened by the whole idea. She knows that Carol also wants to build a granny flat and she wonders if Carol and the Jacksons are trying to get away with something that is illegal.

Jerry is angry! He is certain that the Jacksons’ proposed structure will block sunlight into his garden, and that they will be able to spy on him in his hot tub. He wants to know how he can change City policies to protect his privacy and the privacy of others.

Beth is concerned that the granny flat will be rented to college students. She loves her peaceful residential neighborhood and is worried that students will be noisy and keep her awake at night. She plans to provide testimony against the LDO request.

The Jacksons are frustrated. They know some of their neighbors oppose their proposal and plan to fight it. They had no idea their request would be so controversial and do not understand why their neighbors care what they do with their property.

These are just some possible responses to a proposed change in the neighborhood. You may identify with one or more individuals in the story. Some common questions that are raised in the story are addressed in the pages that follow.



***Susan** feels threatened by the whole idea and wonders if the Jacksons are trying to get away with something illegal.*



INFORMATION

Who are the City's Land Use Decision Makers?

- **Planning Commission**

Most land use requests that are reviewed at a public hearing are decided by the Planning Commission. Planning Commissioners also work on new land use policy and long range planning efforts. The Planning Commission consists of nine volunteers serving three-year terms. Commissioners may serve up to three consecutive terms. No more than two members can have the same occupation. Planning Commissioners are appointed by the City Council.

- **City Council**

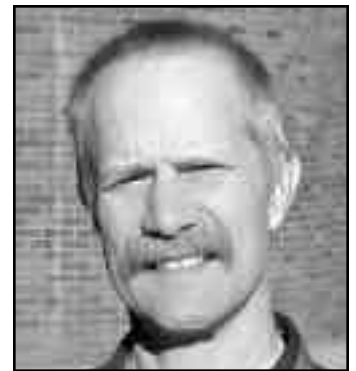
Some land use matters also require City Council approval. The Mayor and City Council set policy for the City. The Council is composed of nine members. Councilors are volunteers who are elected by the voters of each ward for two-year terms. The Mayor and Councilors must reside in the City of Corvallis.

- **Land Development Hearings Board**

The Land Development Hearings Board reviews requests for certain Zoning Map changes and appeals of certain staff-level decisions. Three Planning Commissioners are appointed to the Land Development Hearings Board.

- **Staff**

Some land use actions are reviewed at the staff level. There are opportunities to appeal the staff decision.



***Jerry** wants to know how he can change City policies to protect his privacy and the privacy of others.*



***Beth** has concerns about impacts to her peaceful residential neighborhood.*

"I'm Concerned" - Who Can Answer My Question?



The Jacksons need to know what rules apply to their granny flat development.

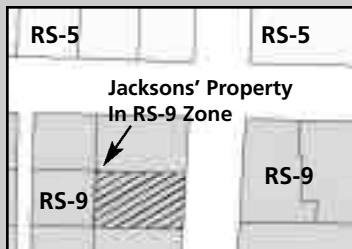


Susan wants to know if the Jacksons' proposal is legal.



INFORMATION

Land Development Code
Zoning Example



The Jacksons' property is located in the "RS-9 Medium Density Residential" zone.

How Can I Find Out What Rules Apply to a Proposed Development?

The Jacksons and Susan will find that all developments in Corvallis must conform with the policies and rules contained in two documents — the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code. The Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code are the primary planning documents that provide the framework for local land use decisions. In basic terms, they specify what land uses go where and how land can be developed. These documents reflect the goals and requirements of the State land use planning program.

The Comprehensive Plan contains land use policies. These policies are implemented by land development regulations in the Land Development Code. The Land Development Code has two components - written text and a Zoning Map.

The Zoning Map shows the zoning that applies to a property. For example, the Jacksons' property is located in the "RS-9 Medium Density Residential" zone.

Susan will be interested to note that a corresponding chapter in the Code specifies the uses of land allowed in that zone and the development standards that apply, such as setbacks and height limitations. This is where the Jacksons will find detailed rules about their development.

If a particular use is an "outright permitted use," it is allowed without any public review. For example, single family homes are allowed "outright" in all residential zones. Granny flats — defined as "accessory dwelling units" — are allowed outright in the RS-9 (Medium Density Residential) zone. So, the answer to Susan's question is that the Jacksons' proposal to build a granny flat is legal.* However, the Jacksons' proposal must comply with all other relevant Code requirements, such as height restrictions and setbacks.

Other uses may be allowed in a zone, but only after there has been an opportunity to review the proposal through a public process. In many of these cases, application for a land use permit is required leading up to review by decision makers — usually the Planning Commission and sometimes also the City Council — through a public hearing process. The Land Development Code outlines the steps

*Property owners in some subdivisions are subject to private party restrictions called "Codes, Covenants, and Restrictions," or "CC&Rs." Property owners should check their title papers to see if such restrictions apply. For example, some CC&Rs may prohibit granny flats. CC&Rs typically are enforced by homeowner associations; the City does not enforce these restrictions.

involved in a public hearing process. The Code also lists the specific criteria that the City's decision makers will use to evaluate the land use proposal. For certain land use proposals, the criteria may include land use policies in the Comprehensive Plan in addition to the Code requirements.



WHAT CAN YOU DO...

Here are some steps you can take to find out what rules and criteria apply:

Review Land Development Code and Comprehensive Plan:

The Land Development Code, Zoning Map, Comprehensive Plan, and Comprehensive Plan Map all are available in the reference section of the Downtown Public Library, on the City's web site, and in the City's Planning Division office.

Contact the City's Development Services Division (766-6929):

The Development Services Division issues permits for construction projects in the City. A planner is available in this Division to help verify the Code requirements that apply to a proposed development. Before constructing improvements on your property, it is recommended that you contact Development Services to confirm the zoning that applies to your property. Depending on what is proposed, building permits may be all that is required. Development Services also processes land use applications that do not require a public hearing. In the Jacksons' case, the application for a lot development option permit is processed by the Development Services Division.

Contact the City's Planning Division (766-6908):

The Planning Division processes land use applications that require a public hearing. Generally, a planner is on-call to answer questions; however, you are encouraged to set up an appointment. The Planning Division accepts most land use applications on the last Monday of every month; these typically will be reviewed at a public hearing approximately two and a half months after the application is submitted. If you are preparing an application, the City recommends that you schedule a "pre-application meeting" to review application requirements and procedures. An application packet with some guidance materials is available from the Planning Division.



INFORMATION

LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

Excerpts From Chapter 3.4:

RS-9 (Medium Density) District

Section 3.4.20 - PERMITTED USES

3.4.20.01 - General Development

a. Primary Uses Permitted Outright

1. (a) Residential Use Types:
Family

b. Accessory Uses Permitted Outright

10. Accessory Dwelling Units* subject to provisions in Chapter 4.9.40

*In the Land Development Code, "granny flats" are defined as" accessory dwelling units."

I Received a Land Use Public Notice - What Does This Mean?



Don received a notice about the Jacksons' request. He had a lot of questions about the information in the notice.

The City is required to send public notices to adjacent property owners and residents for certain land use requests. After the Jacksons applied for the lot development option, the City sent a notice to the neighbors. Notices also are posted on the project site, are sometimes published in the legal section of the local newspaper, and are available from the Planning Division.

The notice is intended to alert Don of the Jacksons' request and to highlight the opportunities that he has to provide official comments — known as testimony — on the proposal. Those making a decision on the case — in this case, staff — will consider Don's testimony before making a final decision.

The notice contains the following information:

- What is being requested.
- What property is involved.
- How the request will be evaluated.
- What criteria apply.
- Who will make a decision about this request.
- How and when you can provide testimony to the City.
- What happens after the City makes a decision.
- Whom you can contact for more information.



WHAT CAN YOU DO...

Because Don had a lot of questions, he is encouraged to contact the staff person identified on the notice. Staff also can help him become familiar with the application request, relevant land use documents, and options for preparing testimony.

Don may also want to discuss his questions and concerns directly with the applicant and/or his neighbors. The City encourages applicants to contact neighbors and others affected by a proposed project. Ideally, this outreach is done before an application is filed so that the proposal can reflect neighbor input and concerns while still meeting the City's Code requirements.

Note that there can be issues related to a proposed development that do not relate to the City's Code or policies. The economic impacts of the project on a neighborhood is one example. Also, an applicant's involvement with a neighborhood often does not end when the City issues a land use permit; the applicant may continue to be involved over a period of years when the project is constructed. Direct communication among all parties is encouraged and may help resolve concerns that emerge at any time.



TIP

If you have any questions, contact the staff person listed on the notice for help.

How Can I Prepare Effective Testimony?

Beth has concerns about the Jackson's lot development option request. She plans to prepare testimony about this request.

Beth needs to direct her comments to the specific criteria that apply to this case. The criteria, from the Land Development Code and the Comprehensive Plan, are listed in the public notice. If she believes that other criteria from these documents apply, Beth can identify these in her testimony, with an explanation regarding how she thinks they apply.

CRITERIA THAT APPLY TO THE JACKSONS' LOT DEVELOPMENT OPTION REQUEST

(From section 2.12.30.06 of the Land Development Code; reproduced in the City's public notice)

The lot development option will be approved where the Development Services Manager finds the following criteria have been met:

- a. The proposed development will not be contrary to the Comprehensive Plan, the purposes and objectives of this Code, and any other applicable policies and standards adopted by the City; and
- b. The proposed development will not substantially reduce the amount of privacy currently enjoyed by the users of nearby structures if the development were located as specified by this Code; and
- c. Existing physical systems and natural systems, such as traffic, drainage, dramatic land forms, or parks, and the potential to use solar energy devices by abutting properties, will not be adversely affected any more than would occur if the development were located as specified in this Code; and
- d. The architectural features of proposed structure(s) will be compatible to the design character of the existing structure(s).

Beth notes that one of the criteria that applies to the Jacksons' LDO application states that the proposed development "cannot substantially reduce the amount of privacy currently enjoyed by users of nearby structures." She decides to focus her testimony on this criteria by describing how her privacy will be impacted by the proposed granny flat.

Beth needs to understand that when land use requests are evaluated, the following outcomes are possible:

- Approval
- Approval, with conditions
- Denial

When requests are approved, it is common for conditions to be imposed — these are called "conditions of approval." When preparing testimony, Beth could ask that the staff impose a specific condition of approval that addresses her concerns. Beth may even want to propose specific wording. Staff can help identify the feasibility of this approach.



Beth plans to prepare testimony about the Jacksons' request.



RESOURCES

A Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI) brochure, "**Corvallis Land Use Decisions: Tips for Providing Effective Testimony**" provides some additional suggestions.

Another CCI publication, "**A Land Use Applicant's Toolkit for Citizen Participation**," provides recommendations to applicants regarding how to conduct citizen outreach, with an emphasis on neighborhood meetings.



WHAT CAN YOU DO...

Beth should contact the City planner working on the application to check if time limits will apply to oral testimony at the hearing. She learned that, in general, citizens should be prepared to limit testimony to four minutes. The City imposes time limits on testimony to give everyone a chance to be heard and also to ensure that the meeting ends at a reasonable hour.

Because time limits may apply, Beth may want to prepare written testimony in addition to oral testimony. At the hearing, she can highlight the most important points of her written testimony. It is most effective to send written testimony for inclusion in the staff report. The staff report is sent to decision makers and is available to public one week before the hearing. That way, decision makers have a chance to read the testimony before the hearing. Beth can contact the city planner working on the case to find out the deadline for including testimony in the staff report - usually around ten days before the hearing.

Citizens can feel frustrated if it does not appear that their testimony was heard and considered. Most often, this happens when testimony does not relate to the applicable criteria that the decision makers can consider. For example, Beth fears that the Jacksons' granny flat will be rented to college students. Whether or not a property is rented — and to whom — is not something the City's decision makers can consider; in fact, under State law, the City would assume legal liability for discrimination if it were to do so. The impact of a proposal on property values is another example of a concern that is sometimes raised but which cannot be considered as applicable criteria. Applicable criteria are described further in the second part of this guide.



How are Land Use Policies or Regulations Changed?

Jerry is upset about the City's accessory dwelling unit regulations, believing that they do not protect the neighbors' privacy. He would like to see the regulations changed. All changes to the City's zoning regulations documents must be approved by the City Council, after Planning Commission and City Council public hearings.



WHAT CAN YOU DO...

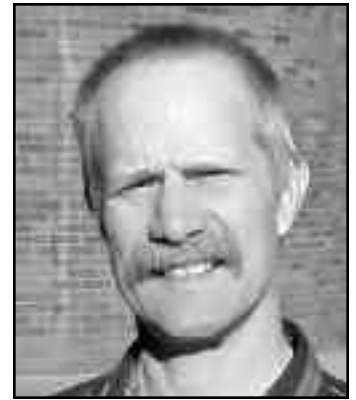
Jerry can ask the Planning Commission or the City Council to consider initiating a change to the City's accessory dwelling unit regulations. He needs to recognize that this process can be involved and may not resolve his immediate concerns about the Jacksons' proposal.

Here are some issues that Jerry may want to consider:

- What are the deficiencies with the existing Code (or Comprehensive Plan)?
- How could the Code be changed to address these deficiencies?
- How can I make a compelling case that these changes are needed and are consistent with City policies?
- Are there other ways that my concerns can be addressed?
- Are there any future City efforts planned to amend the Code or Comprehensive Plan? If so, could this request be considered as part of that effort?
- How should I prepare my request for the Planning Commission's or City Council's consideration?

A city planner can help you work through these questions. Note that the same questions apply if you would like the City to adopt a new land use policy. For example, you may have witnessed a new approach to land use planning during a trip to another city. You could do some research to find out about that city's approach and see how it might apply to Corvallis.

Another important option is to get involved with a long range planning effort to revise or create new land use policies for Corvallis. Periodically, the City is required to update its primary planning documents. The City also prepares plans for certain areas of the community and for specific planning topics such as transportation and natural resource protection. Often, one or more citizen advisory committees are developed to assist with long range planning efforts. By getting involved in these activities, you have a chance to help set new policy and establish the framework for future planning decisions. You may want to discuss your ideas with your City Councilor. You also are encouraged to contact the Planning Division to find out more about any current or future long range planning efforts.



Jerry would like to see the regulations changed.



TIP

By getting involved in long range planning activities, you have a chance to help set new policy and establish the framework for future planning decisions.

"I'm Going to Do Something"- How to Get Involved



Local government is heavily dependent upon the participation of its citizens. In recent years, citizens volunteered at least 60,000 hours to the City of Corvallis annually, not including volunteer hours served on City Boards and Commissions! This represents a significant cost savings to the taxpayer, and shows that citizens have the opportunity to participate in their governing and make a difference. This figure excludes the sizeable number of hours that citizens

spent working on various issues outside the City's volunteer system.

Citizens can, and do, participate in the land use process in a wide variety of ways, ranging from a multi-year commitment on a policy committee to attending a few meetings to giving testimony on a specific issue. Participation at all these levels is important and improves our community's land use decisions.

Very often, citizens only get involved in a land use issue when they receive an announcement about a public hearing. However, this is just one of the ways to participate. Some of the opportunities for getting involved are detailed in the charts on the next page.



Citizen Involvement Opportunity	Specific Actions	Possible Outcomes
Participate in Long Range Planning Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Plans (e.g., West Corvallis, South Corvallis) • Comprehensive Plan Updates • Land Development Code Updates • Master Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get appointed to a citizen advisory committee or task force. If no formal application process applies, contact the Mayor or City staff to express your interest. • Participate in open houses and/or workshops. • Provide input on draft plans and codes. 	<p><i>Jerry decides to attend a series of Land Development Code meetings that are happening to put new Comprehensive Plan rules into effect. He shares his concerns about granny flats so that some Code provisions might be enacted to protect the privacy of existing homes.</i></p>
Participate in a Standing City Board or Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Commission • Committee for Citizen Involvement • Historic Preservation Advisory Board 	<p>Planning Commissioners are appointed by the City Council. The Mayor makes appointments to all other City Boards and Commissions. Some eligibility criteria apply. Terms are for three years and begin on July 1. Individuals may serve up to three consecutive terms. Applications for Planning Commission vacancies are required; these vacancies are publicized in the local newspaper.</p>	<p><i>Anna Jackson decides to apply to serve on the Planning Commission. She has learned a lot about land use issues as a result of her granny flat proposal and is interested in helping with future land use decisions.</i></p>
Get Involved in City or State Legislative Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend that the City Council initiate new land use policies/regulations • Work with the State to recommend changes to State land use requirements. 	<p><i>Don returned from a vacation excited about an innovative approach to new housing development that he saw in another state. He did some research and prepared a recommendation to the City Council that they consider Code changes to promote this type of development in Corvallis.</i></p>
Participate at the Neighborhood Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk directly with neighbors. • Contact property owner to discuss his or her development plans. • Host a neighborhood meeting. • Promote informal discussion about land use issues. • Participate in a neighborhood meeting hosted by an applicant. • Organize a new neighborhood association or attend meetings of existing one. • Review the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code to understand what is planned for your neighborhood. 	<p><i>Carol has had one-on-one conversations over the back fence with the Jacksons, Jerry, and Beth. She knows that not all her neighbors are as excited about granny flats as she is. She does not want this issue to harm the strong sense of community their block feels for each other. Carol hosts an informal discussion at her house for people to share their concerns and come up with ideas for how to address those concerns if and when granny flats are built nearby.</i></p>
Participate in Land Use Public Hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide written testimony. • Provide oral testimony. • Work with others to jointly prepare testimony. • Make appeals if you feel the relevant criteria have not been met. 	<p><i>Beth visits with Jerry to discuss the lot development option request. Finding they have similar concerns, they prepare written testimony to the City.</i></p>

A Few Final Tips For Getting Involved



TIP

Involvement =
Being Heard; Learning
from Others

Involvement ≠
Always Getting
Exactly What
You Want

It is important to know when and where to get involved in order to address your interests and concerns. Working on land use issues can take a lot of energy and emotion. The following suggestions can help ensure that your efforts are as productive as possible.



WHAT CAN YOU DO...

- Be open to incremental change;
- Be willing to compromise and work toward consensus;
- Demonstrate an interest in what works for the community as a whole;
- Adopt a proactive, rather than a reactive, mindset; and
- Enter the process with an open mind and with respect and appreciation for other interests and points of views;

This approach will help you minimize the stress and conflict that sometimes exist in the land use arena.

Expect decision makers to be informed, thoughtful and fair, but understand that they may not always agree with you.

Decision makers need to consider the interests of the community as a whole, as reflected in existing land use policies and regulations. Getting involved doesn't always mean getting exactly what you want, but does ensure that your concerns are heard and considered.

Other Ideas for

More Ideas for Involvement:

- Write an article for the newspaper ("As I See It," letters to the editor).
- Join community organizations which encourage public involvement in land use issues.
- Meet with a City Councilor at Library "comment corners."
- Respond to surveys when asked.
- Run for City Council.
- Vote! Support candidates who value public involvement.



You will have the greatest impact if you adopt the following practices:

- Become involved early, and consistently, in the process.
- Always do your homework. Try to:
 - Understand arguments in favor and in opposition to the proposal.
 - Understand the criteria and policies that apply.
 - Anticipate conflict or controversies and suggest solutions or exceptions.
 - Be prepared with examples of successful applications elsewhere.
- Provide written, not just oral, testimony.
- Suggest actual policy or Code language or specific changes to draft language.
- Follow issues through from policy to code implementation.



Corvallis Neighborhood Associations

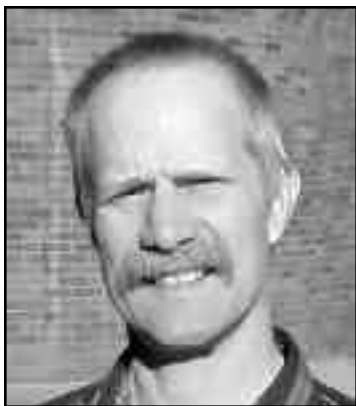
The Community Development Department sends land use public notices and other information to recognized Corvallis neighborhood associations. To be recognized by the City, a neighborhood association must meet the following criteria:

- Define the neighborhood's geographic boundaries.
- Allow all residents and property owners within the defined area to participate.
- Develop bylaws.
- Provide a written address and up to two contact people within the association. These individuals will be responsible for disseminating information for the association.

Neighborhood associations are eligible for neighborhood improvement grants funded through the City's neighborhood empowerment program. Grant applications usually are available in March and are due at the beginning of May. The City Council decides which projects will be funded, after reviewing recommendations from a citizen advisory committee.

For further information about Corvallis neighborhood associations or the neighborhood empowerment program, contact the City's Community Development Department.

Happily Ever After?... An Outcome to Our Story



You may wonder what happened with the Jacksons' lot development option request. Here is a possible outcome:

Jerry learned that changing the City's granny flat policies to provide for more privacy could take a lot of time. He decided to wait until the City initiated a new set of Land Development Code changes to make some recommendations. In the meantime, he decided to talk directly with the Jacksons. He let the Jacksons know that he had concerns about how their proposal would impact his privacy. **Jerry** and the **Jacksons** discussed some options for addressing his concerns.



Jerry and **Beth** decided to prepare written testimony to the City about the lot development option, describing how their privacy would be impacted if the new granny flat was allowed to be built closer to their properties. They recommended that the City impose specific conditions of approval to limit the height of the new granny flat and to otherwise protect their privacy.

After reviewing all written testimony, staff approved the lot development option for a reduced rear yard setback to allow the Jacksons to build a granny flat in their back yard. However, in response to Jerry and Beth's testimony, staff imposed a condition of approval to restrict the granny flat to one story in height.

Once the City's lot development option decision was final, the **Jacksons** began to work on their building plans in earnest. They shared some draft plans with their neighbors and asked for input. The granny flat was constructed within six months. **Anna's** parents moved in shortly thereafter.



PART II: LOCAL LAND USE DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

As described in Part I, the Corvallis Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code are official documents that provide the framework for local planning decisions. In basic terms, they establish what land uses go where, and how land can be developed. These documents reflect community preferences regarding how Corvallis should grow over time. These documents also reflect the goals and requirements of the State land use planning program, which is described in more detail in Part III. The relationship between State and local land use planning is shown in the diagram on the next page. In Part II, local land use decision making processes are described in more detail.

Comprehensive Plan - A Blueprint for Future Urban Development

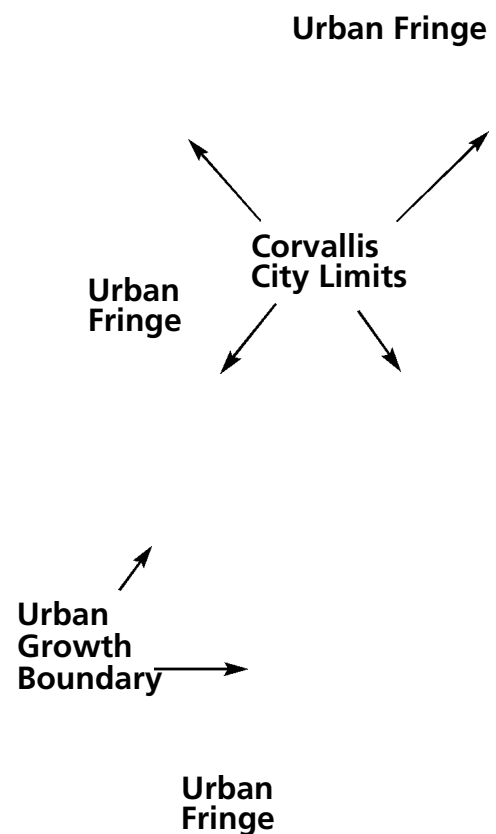
The Comprehensive Plan reflects community values and preferences on land use planning. The 1980 Comprehensive Plan was the City's first and was the result of more than seven years of work by citizens, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. The Plan was revised in 1990 and 1998, each time with extensive community participation.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a blueprint for future growth in the Corvallis Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Urban Growth Boundaries separate rural land from land that is or eventually will be urban. The boundaries are intended to protect farm and forest lands outside the UGBs by limiting where cities can grow over time. They also promote efficient development patterns that are less costly to serve with sewer and water lines and streets. All cities in Oregon are required to have a UGB. Cities must designate sufficient land inside their UGB to meet the projected residential, industrial, commercial, and recreational needs of the community, for at least 20 years.

The Comprehensive Plan has two components, a text document and a map. The Comprehensive Plan text contains background information ("findings") and specific land use policies. It is organized around major planning subjects, such as housing and economic development, which correspond to Statewide planning goals. The Comprehensive Plan Map shows land use categories ("designations") that identify the types of land uses allowed in different areas of the UGB.



INFORMATION



Land that is outside the City limits but within the Urban Growth Boundary is subject to Benton County zoning regulations; this area is sometimes called the "Urban Fringe."

Corvallis Planning Process

State Planning Context



Statewide Planning
Goals & Guidelines
(Program first adopted
in 1973)

Local Planning Context



Community Vision
(2020 Vision Statement
adopted in 1998)

Comprehensive Plan
(last revised 1998)
Policies
Land Use Designations

Implementation Tools

Plans

Facility Plans
(e.g. water, sewer, etc)

Capital Improvement
Program

Specific Plans and
Special Area Plans
(e.g. West Corvallis,
South Corvallis)

Regulations

Land Development Code
and Zoning District Map

City Charter

City Policies

City Ordinances

Other Initiatives

Agreements
(e.g. City-County Urban
Fringe Management
between City of
Corvallis & Benton
County)

Resource Inventories
(e.g. wetlands,
historic buildings)

Special Studies

Investments

Private Site Development

Utility Systems

Transportation Systems
Public Facilities
(e.g. parks, buildings)

Public Services and Programs

Land Development Code

The land use policies of the Comprehensive Plan are implemented by the City's zoning ordinance, the Land Development Code. The Code contains specific standards for development of land in the City limits. It also includes a Land Development Code Zoning Map, which implements the Comprehensive Plan Map. For example, there are three low density residential zones, RS-3.5, RS-5, and RS-6, on the Zoning Map that correspond to areas subject to the "low density residential" designation on the Comprehensive Plan Map.

The Land Development Code also contains procedures for local land use decisions. Many planning decisions are routine and may only involve a building permit for a use that is allowed outright under the Code. Uses that are not allowed outright are subject to more detailed review. This allows the City to consider whether the proposed use is appropriate for the location.

In some cases, staff make a decision about a proposal after adjacent property owners and residents have been notified and given an opportunity to submit written comments. In other cases, a public hearing before the Planning Commission and sometimes also the City Council is required. In these cases, the Planning Commission and the City Council are the decision makers. Decision makers take input and testimony and make judgments about the proposal based on their understanding of the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code.



INFORMATION

Land Development Code

- Article I - General Provisions
- Article II - Administrative Procedures
- Article III - Zoning Districts
- Article IV - Development Standards
- Zoning Map



INFORMATION

Example of Comprehensive Plan Policy Implemented in the Land Development Code

Comprehensive Plan Transportation Policy 11.4.3: "All traffic generators shall provide adequate parking."

Land Development Code Section 4.1.30-Off-Street Parking Requirements:

c. Commercial Use Types:

Retail Sales, General - 1 [off-street parking] space per 400 sq.ft. of gross floor area



Corvallis Land Use Actions

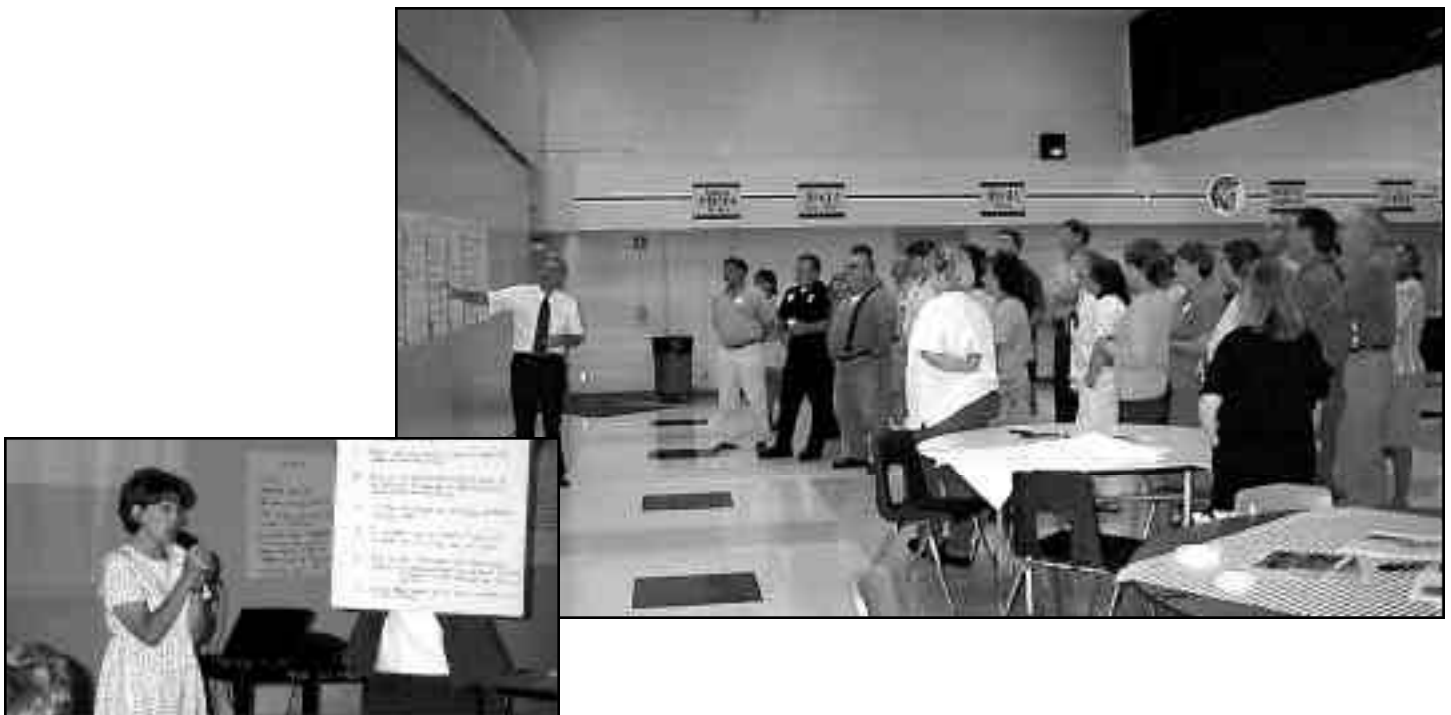
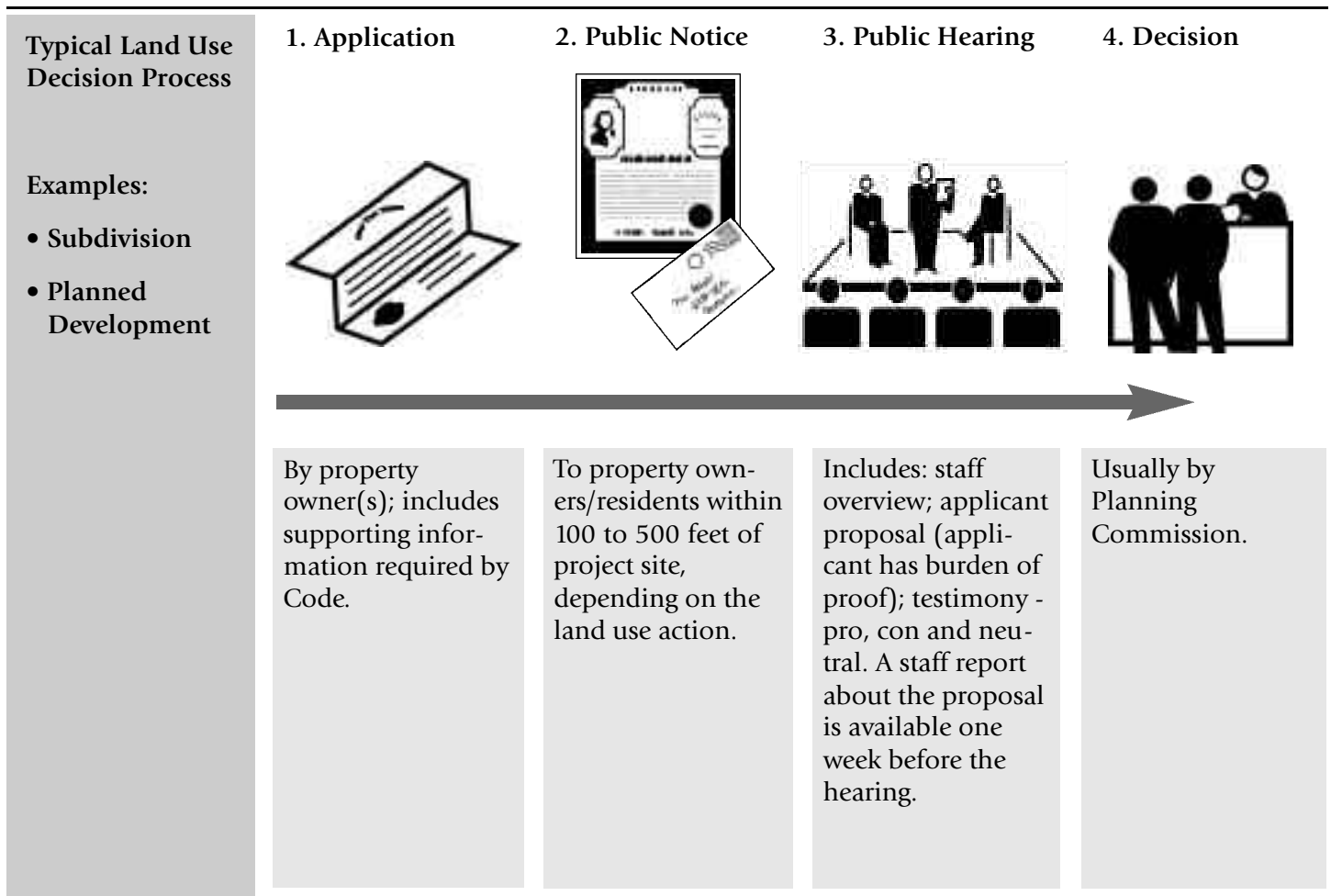
The following table summarizes Corvallis land use actions. Many land use applications have more than one component — for example, a subdivision proposal may also include a planned development request. Decision makers will evaluate each request against the relevant criteria for each request. It is possible that one portion of an application could be approved and another denied. **If you are preparing testimony, be clear about the part of the application that you are addressing.**

Action	Acronym	Description
Annexation	ANN	Adding land to the City Limits. Most require voter approval except for “health hazard annexations.” A health hazard annexation adds property to the City limits to relieve a documented public health hazard, such as a failing septic system. The appropriate zone that would apply to a property, if it is annexed, is evaluated as part of all annexation applications. Usually initiated by property owner.
Comprehensive Plan Amendment	CPA	A change to a land use designation on the Comprehensive Plan Map or to the Comprehensive Plan text (for example, to incorporate new Comprehensive Plan policies). Initiated by a property owner, the Planning Commission, or the City Council.
Conditional Development	CDP	Allows certain uses in a zone to occur after the potential impacts to the surrounding properties, neighborhood and community have been evaluated and mitigated. The specific uses that are allowed through conditional development review are identified for each zone in the Land Development Code. Initiated by property owner.
Director Interpretation	DDI	A request for an official written interpretation of the Land Development Code, the Comprehensive Plan, or other land use regulation. Request initiated by property owner; interpretation made by the City’s Community Development Department Director.
Land Development Code Text Amendment	LDT	Changing the text of the Land Development Code. An example is the adoption of new development standards for an existing zone. Usually initiated by the Planning Commission or City Council.
Land Partition	MLP	Dividing a parcel of land into three or fewer lots in a single calendar year. Initiated by property owner.

Action	Acronym	Description
Lot Development Option	LDO	Allows a variance from development standards on individual lots. If multiple zoning variances are needed, a planned development application may be required. Initiated by property owner.
Lot Line Adjustment	LLA	Adjustment to the location of a lot line. Initiated by property owner.
Plan Compatibility Review	PCR	Allows for review of certain uses to evaluate compatibility with the site and nearby land uses. The specific uses that are allowed through plan compatibility review are identified for each zone in the Land Development Code. Initiated by property owner.
Planned Development (Sometimes described as a "conceptual development plan" or "detailed development plan." Can also include "major" or "minor modifications" to these plans.)	PLD	Allows flexibility in project site design by allowing modifications to the zoning development standards in exchange for other public benefits. For example, an applicant may request that lot size or setback requirements be modified to protect a wetland area. A detailed development plan is required to show, in detail, how the project will be built. Applicants can choose to apply first for a conceptual development plan; however, subsequent approval will be needed for a detailed development plan, consistent with the original conceptual development plan. Initiated by property owner.
Subdivision (“Tentative subdivision plat”)	SUB	Dividing a parcel of land into four or more units. Initiated by property owner.
Willamette River Greenway Permit	WRG	The Willamette River Greenway is a defined area along the Willamette River; the Greenway is shown on the City’s Zoning Map. Development (with some limited exemptions) in the Willamette River Greenway is evaluated in order to assess the impacts on the Willamette River. The conditional development review process applies to these applications. Initiated by property owner.
Zoning Map District Change	ZDC	Making a zone change on the Land Development Code Map. Initiated by a property owner or the City Council.

Article II of the Land Development Code contains more detailed information about each land use action.

A typical land use decision process is as follows:



CORVALLIS LAND USE DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

Land Use Application	Public Notice	Public Hearing	Decision By	Local Appeal	State Appeal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Permit (Allows construction of permitted use) 	No	No	Staff/ Development Services Manager	Board of Appeals ¹	Building Codes Structures Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot Development Option • Land Partition • Lot Line Adjustment⁴ • Plan Compatibility Review 	Yes ²	No	Staff/ Development Services Manager	Land Development Hearings Board ³ ; after that to City Council	Land Use Board of Appeals ⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditional Development • Planned Development • Subdivision • Willamette River Greenway Permits • Zoning Map Changes⁵ 	Yes	Yes - Planning Commission	Planning Commission	City Council	Land Use Board of Appeals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Development Code Text Amendment • Zoning Map Changes⁵ • Comprehensive Plan Text Amendment • Comprehensive Plan Map Changes 	Yes	Yes - Planning Commission, followed by City Council	City Council	Not Applicable	Land Use Board of Appeals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annexations 	Yes	Yes - Planning Commission, followed by City Council	Corvallis Voters ⁶	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

- 1) The Board of Appeals hears appeals of decisions made by the City's building official or fire marshall relative to technical and/or scientific aspects of the Building Code or Fire Code.
- 2) Public notice is not required for lot line adjustment proposals.
- 3) The Land Development Hearings Board is a three-member subcommittee of the Planning Commission.
- 4) The State Land Use Board of Appeals is a three-member panel which reviews appeals of local land use decisions.
- 5) A Zoning Map change that is initiated by a property owner that does not require a corresponding Comprehensive Plan Map amendment is reviewed by the Land Development Hearings Board. If a corresponding Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment is needed, the Zoning Map and Comprehensive Plan Map changes are reviewed by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission or the City Council can initiate Zoning Map changes that apply Citywide or to a section of the community (such as all commercial zones); these changes must be approved by the City Council.
- 6) The City Council decides whether the request meets criteria for placing the annexation on the ballot. Health hazard annexations do not require voter approval.

Example Corvallis Land Use Project

Many land use applications include more than one request. It also is common for projects to change over time - sometimes even the project name changes! Subsequent applications may be needed to request a modification from what was originally approved. The Stoneybrook Retirement Community project located in southwest Corvallis illustrates all these points, as described below. Most projects are not as complicated as this one; however, this example shows how separate requests and modifications are evaluated.

Stoneybrook Retirement Community land use Applications

1996 - Original "Pleasant View" Application (Annexation, Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment, Zoning Map District Change, and Planned Development)

Application:

- Combined application for an Annexation, a Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment, a Zoning Map District Change, and a Planned Development to allow for the development of a retirement community on 41.5 acres.
- The Annexation request would bring the property into the City limits.
- The Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment request was to change the land use designation of 10.4 acres from Low Density Residential to Medium-High Density Residential on the Comprehensive Plan Map. A Medium-High Density Residential land use designation allows the "group residential/group care" land use that applies to a retirement facility.
- The Zoning Map District Change request was to change the zoning of this 10.4 acres to PD(RS-12) - Medium-High Density Residential with a Planned Development Overlay and to zone the remaining 31.1 acres to PD(RS-6) - Low Density Residential with a Planned Development Overlay.
- The Planned Development request was for a conceptual development plan for the project site; the Planned Development also allowed the applicant to vary from some zoning development standards.

Decisions:

- Reviewed by Planning Commission and City Council at separate hearings.
- The Planning Commission forwarded recommendations on the Annexation and Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment requests to the City Council. The Planning Commission approved the Zoning Map District Change and Planned Development conceptual development plan, contingent on the property being annexed to the City and City Council approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment.
- The Planning Commission Zoning Map District Change approval was appealed to the City Council.
- The City Council approved the Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment and upheld the Planning Commission's decisions regarding the Zoning Map District Change and the Planned Development. The City Council also forwarded the annexation request to the voters.
- The voters approved the annexation in November, 1996.



1997 - Planned Development and Subdivision Application for Phase I

Application:

- Combined application for a Planned Development (detailed development plan) and a Tentative Subdivision Plat for Phase I of the project involving 16.6 acres.
- The detailed development plan showed how this phase of the project was going to be built, consistent with the original conceptual development plan.
- The tentative subdivision plat allowed for the creation of 38 lots.

Decision:

- The Planning Commission approved these requests.
- Around the time these decisions were made, the project name changed from Pleasant View Retirement Community to Stoneybrook Village Retirement Community.

1997 - Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Application:

- Comprehensive Plan Amendment to amend the Transportation Plan Map classification of a street that will be located in the retirement community from "neighborhood collector" to "local."
- The Corvallis Transportation Plan is adopted into the Comprehensive Plan. Different construction standards apply to the various street classifications.

Decisions:

- Both the Planning Commission and City Council reviewed the Comprehensive Plan Amendment request at separate hearings.
- The Planning Commission recommended that this request be approved.
- The City Council denied this request and the "neighborhood collector" classification remained.

1998 - Planned Development (Minor Modification to Phase I Detailed Development Plan)

Application:

- Planned Development minor modification to increase the square footage of a community recreation building, to add carports to portions of a parking lot, and to make other minor changes to the Phase I detailed development plan that was approved in 1997.

Decision:

- Approved by the Planning Commission.

1999 - Planned Development (Phase II Detailed Development Plan)

Application:

- Planned Development for a detailed development plan for Phase II of the project relating to the assisted living facility.

Decision:

- Approved by the Planning Commission.

Typical Land Use Decision Timeframes

In Oregon, all local governments must make a decision on a land use application within 120 days of the date the application is considered complete. This must include time to allow for any appeals at the local level — for example, from the Planning Commission to the City Council. This '120-day rule' is intended to balance two objectives: providing a predictable, efficient land use decision making process while also ensuring opportunities for citizens to participate in those decisions impacting their homes or community. Timeframes for a typical land use decision in Corvallis are shown on the following page.



TIP

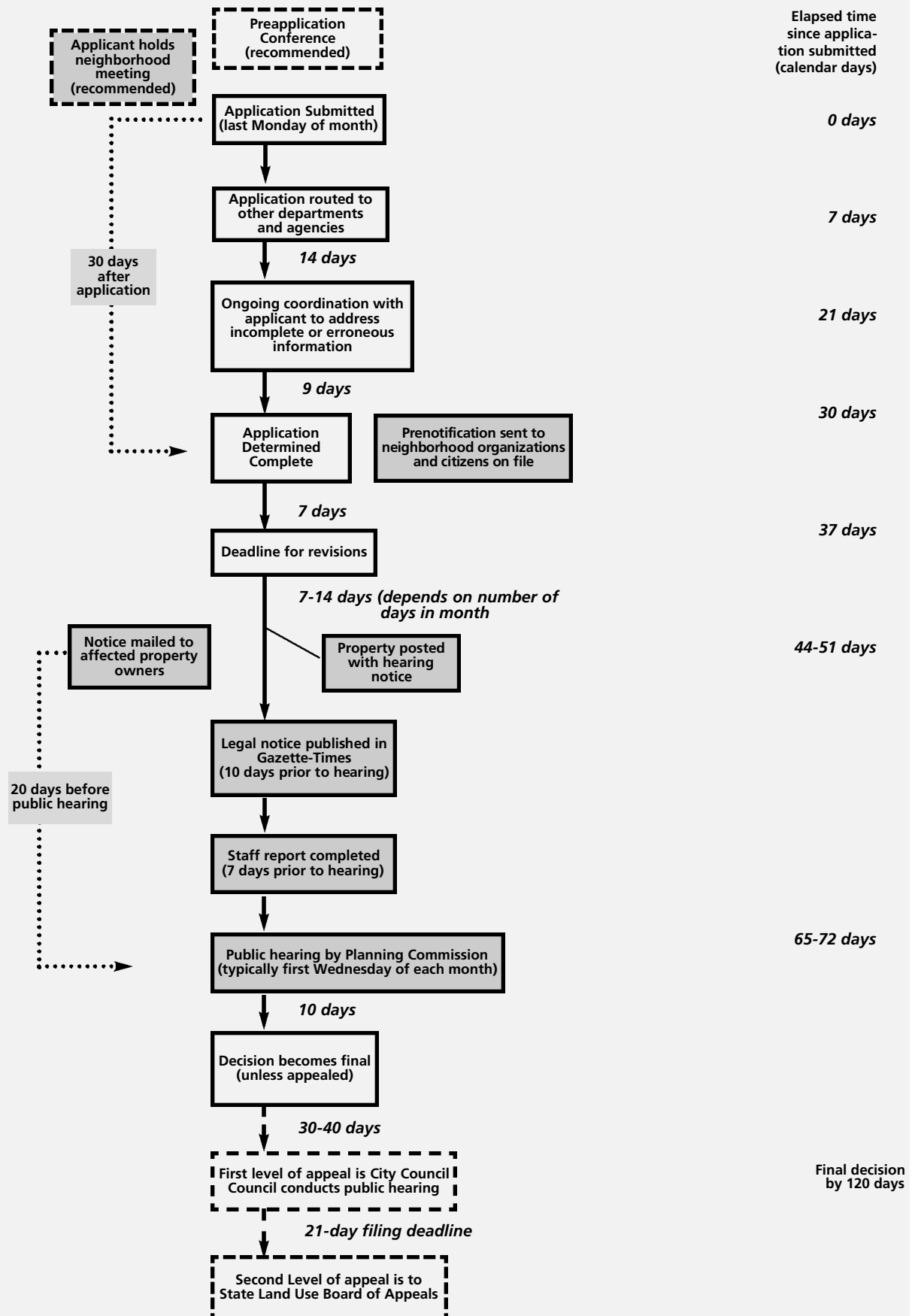
The public notice signals your time to act! It is important to get involved as early as you can.

By being familiar with the City's review process and timeframes, you can anticipate some key opportunities to get involved. In most cases, individuals become aware of a proposed land use action when they receive a public notice in the mail. If a hearing is required, the notice usually is sent 20 days before a public hearing. If a hearing is not required, you usually have 14 days to submit comments on the proposal before a staff decision is made.

The public notice signals your time to act! It is important to get involved as early as you can so that you have time to have your questions answered, to do some background research, if needed, and to prepare testimony.



Corvallis Development Review Process



Review Criteria

When making a land use decision, the City's decision makers must consider applicable criteria from the Land Development Code and Comprehensive Plan, including policies from other planning documents that are adopted into the Comprehensive Plan. Examples of these other documents include area plans (such as the South Corvallis Plan), water and sewer facility plans, and the Transportation Plan.

When a land use decision is made, the following steps are involved:

- Identification of applicable review criteria;
- Consideration of facts showing how the application does or does not meet the applicable criteria;
- Decisions based on evaluation of the presented facts and how they respond to the criteria; and
- Project approval, approval with conditions, or denial.

To be effective, your testimony must respond to the specific criteria that the decision makers can consider for a particular case. The Land Development Code contains specific review criteria for each land use action (e.g. a subdivision or an annexation) that must be evaluated; these criteria are located in Article II of the Code. These criteria, plus any others that staff have determined to be relevant to the request, are listed in the public notice. For requests that go to a public hearing, the relevant criteria are analyzed in more detail in a staff report that is available one week before the hearing. You may want to organize your testimony in a way that recognizes this decision making process.

You may raise other criteria if you believe other criteria that are part of the Comprehensive Plan and/or Land Development Code have not been considered. It is helpful to provide your reasoning regarding how you think the additional criteria apply.



It is important to recognize that decision makers often must balance from among many perhaps conflicting criteria.

Decision makers also need to weigh the needs of the immediate neighborhood with the needs of the community as a whole.

Also, there may be issues about the proposal that concern you but do not relate to the criteria that the decision makers can consider.

For example, an annexation application does not need to include a detailed site plan of the development that will occur if the land is annexed; instead, only a “general land use plan” is required. Testimony about site plan details that may or may not be associated with the future development, if it is annexed, cannot be considered by the decision makers. The situation is different if the applicant has submitted a planned development application with the annexation request. As part of a planned development application, a detailed site plan is required. The City can consider the details of the site plan as part of the planned development application though these still have no bearing on the annexation request.



Even though decision makers may not be able to consider all issues of concern, there are some other constructive options.

For example, you can raise your concerns to the applicant directly. You may also ask the applicant to hold a neighborhood meeting to discuss the proposal. By learning about your concerns, the applicant can consider making changes to the proposal in ways that still meet the City’s land use requirements.



TIP

Some Common Questions About Public Hearings

Decision Maker Declarations:

In quasi-judicial hearings, members of the hearing body must declare any conflict of interests, “ex parte” communications, and site visits. These declarations provide for a fair, open public hearing process. All members need to have access to the same information that is available to the public for making a decision.

This is why members of the Planning Commission and City Council are encouraged not to discuss land use applications with citizens outside of a public hearing context. Such discussions would need to be disclosed in full as ex parte contacts, may raise questions about the member’s impartiality, and could cast doubts on the member’s vote. Disclosure of ex parte contacts is not required for legislative hearings. Site visits are not mandatory.

Staff’s Role:

The staff’s role in the public hearing process is to provide information to decision makers based on their professional analysis regarding whether the application meets applicable criteria. Staff reports do include recommendations; however, staff are not advocates for the project. Prior to the hearing, staff provide assistance to both applicants and the general public regarding how they might most effectively participate in the land use process.

The Public Hearing Process



INFORMATION

Types of Land Use Decisions

Quasi-Judicial: Applies to one or a limited number of properties. Typically in response to an application submitted by a property owner.

Legislative: Involves the creation of new policy. Usually applies citywide or to a large number of properties in a specific category (e.g. all commercially-zoned property).

Public hearings are conducted in a legal manner, with decision makers rendering a legal judgment on an application. In fact, the review of an individual land use application is sometimes called a “quasi-judicial” decision.

Slightly different hearing procedures apply for “legislative” decisions. These entail the creation of new policy, such as new land use regulations affecting the City as a whole or a large number of properties.

At a typical hearing, the opportunity for public testimony follows decision maker “declarations”, a staff overview of the proposal, an applicant presentation, and a full staff report. Testimony in favor of the application is presented first, followed by testimony in opposition, and then neutral testimony. An opportunity for rebuttal follows the initial testimony. Rebuttal testimony must be limited in scope to issues raised at the public hearing. Sur-rebuttal testimony follows; this is limited to issues raised in rebuttal testimony.

If you are presenting testimony, you will be asked to come forward to sign in. The chair may impose a time limit – usually four minutes — on testimony; check with staff ahead of time to see if this is likely. If you have prepared written testimony for distribution to the decision makers, try to provide this to the City ahead of time. City staff will arrange to distribute copies to the decision makers at the hearing. Otherwise, be sure to bring enough copies to the hearing for distribution to the hearing body, recording secretary, and staff – 15 copies is recommended.

In many cases, the Planning Commission or City Council will make a final decision at the hearing. However, deliberations and a final decision can be deferred to a second meeting, if either of the following requests is made as part of oral or written testimony:

- **A request to hold the written record open:**

Anyone participating in the hearing may request seven additional days in which to submit written testimony. This request is automatically granted by the hearing body.

- **A request to continue the hearing to a second meeting:**

Individuals also may request that the hearing be continued to a second meeting. This request applies if new information in favor of the application is submitted at the hearing. This request is not automatically granted.



INFORMATION






General Order of Proceedings for Land Use Hearings

- I. Introduction
- II. Open Public Hearing:
 - Commission/Council Declarations
 - Staff Overview
 - Applicant Presentation
 - Staff Report
 - Public Testimony:
 - Initial Testimony:
 - In Favor
 - In Opposition
 - Neutral
 - Rebuttal:
 - Rebuttal
 - Sur-rebuttal
- III. Close Public Hearing
- IV. Commission/Council Questions of Staff
- V. Commission/Council Deliberations
- VI. Commission/Council Decision

Some differences apply to hearings for quasi-judicial, legislative, and appeal decisions. Contact the Planning Division for more information.

The hearing body can decide to defer deliberations and/or final decision to a second meeting. The decision makers also can decide to hear additional testimony at a second meeting. Decision makers may approve, modify, or deny the proposed application.* Typically, specific “conditions of approval” are imposed. Future development must comply with these conditions of approval. If there is no appeal, the decision goes into effect after the appeal period ends. The following table summarizes some key opportunities to get involved during the public hearing process:

PUBLIC HEARING TIMEFRAMES - KEY OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

When	Action You Can Take	
30 days before public hearing 	“Prenotification” of the land use application sent to neighborhood associations and other organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find out if there is a neighborhood association for your area — or other organization with which you are involved — that receives these notices. Ask how you can find out about land use prenotifications. If no neighborhood association exists for your area, consider starting one!
20 days before public hearing 	Land use public notice mailed to affected property owners and residents. Land use notice is published in the local newspaper. Sign is posted on site with the land use notice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the public notice! Pay particular attention to the review criteria and Code requirements that apply. Contact staff for further information or to discuss your concerns. Schedule an appointment to review the application and to do other background research. Discuss the project with your neighbors. Contact the applicant to discuss the project. Recommend that the applicant meet with neighbors if he or she has not already done so. Prepare written comments for inclusion in the staff report that is sent to decision makers one week before the hearing. You may want to coordinate this with others.
7 days before public hearing 	Staff report available for the public hearing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain a copy of and read the staff report. Contact staff to ask questions. Prepare written or oral testimony. Again, you may want to do this with others.
 Public hearing date 	Decision makers decide on application after considering public testimony (unless the meeting is continued).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide oral and/or written testimony at the hearing. Request that the written record be held open for seven days to submit additional information. Request that the hearing be continued to a second meeting for consideration of new information presented at the hearing.
Within 10 days of the date of the final decision (Planning Commission and Land Development Hearing Board decisions)	Deadline for filing local appeal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> File an appeal if you feel relevant criteria have not been met.
Within 21 days of the date of the final decision (City Council decisions)	Deadline for filing appeal to LUBA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> File an appeal if you feel relevant criteria have not been met.

*Occasionally, the City Council holds a separate meeting to adopt formal findings which document the basis for its land use decision. This usually occurs when a Planning Commission or a Land Development Hearings Board decision has been appealed to the City Council. In these cases, the final decision is made when the Council adopts the formal findings; this also is when the opportunity to appeal the City's decision to the State Land Use Board of Appeals begins.

Appeals

If you are not satisfied with a local land use decision, you have the right to appeal the decision to a higher decision making body. The Land Development Code includes procedures for filing an appeal. Staff decisions are usually appealed to the Land Development Hearings Board, a three-member committee of the Planning Commission. Planning Commission decisions are appealed to the City Council. City Council decisions are appealed to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA), a State body charged with reviewing appeals of local land use decisions (see “Corvallis Land Use Decision Making Processes” chart on page 22).

Almost all appeals of local land use decisions go to LUBA rather than circuit or district courts. To have standing to appeal a local decision to LUBA, you must have presented testimony at the local level. Those appealing a local decision to LUBA must show how the local decision violated local ordinances, local plans, State law, or Statewide planning goals. LUBA cannot re-decide the basic issues of the case. LUBA can only review evidence that was presented to local decision makers. LUBA determines whether the City has properly applied the relevant standards and has enough evidence to support its decision.



INFORMATION

The Land Development Code defines these “affected parties” having standing to appeal a local land use decision as:

- The applicant or the applicant’s authorized agent.
- Any person who testified orally or in writing before the decision maker whose decision is being appealed.
- Any neighborhood organization that testified orally or in writing before the decision maker whose decision is being appealed.
- Any City agency, officer, or department that is responsible for provision of City facilities and services to the proposed development.
- Ten registered voters who are City residents.
- Any person who is entitled to appeal a land use decision pursuant to State law.

Local appeals must be filed with the City within 10 days of the date the final decision is made. Appeals of City Council decisions to LUBA must be filed within 21 days of the date of the final decision. Technically, the appeal clock begins on the day that a “notice of disposition” is signed.* The notice of disposition is a document that describes the final decision, how the decision was made, any conditions of approval, and the appeal deadline. If you testified on the application, orally or in writing, you will receive a copy of the notice of disposition.

*State law relating to the calculation of the appeal deadline has been subject to change. As a practical matter, citizens may want to use the hearing date as their starting point, and calculate the appeal deadline –10 days for a Planning Commission hearing and 21 days for a City Council hearing — from that date. When in doubt about the deadline, contact the City’s Planning Division. Some differences also apply to legislative hearings.

Long Range Planning Efforts

Under State law, Corvallis is required to update its major planning documents periodically to keep them current with conditions in the community, State mandates, and local priorities. The City's Comprehensive Plan was first created in 1980 and was revised in 1990 and 1998. The Land Development Code was adopted in 1981 to reflect the policies of the first Comprehensive Plan; the Code also was updated in 1993 and 2000 to reflect subsequent Plan changes. The City also revised its Zoning and Comprehensive Plan Maps as part of these processes.

One of the most effective ways to help set local land use policy is to participate in the updates of the Comprehensive Plan and the Code when these occur. Typically, one or more citizen advisory committees will be created to guide staff and consultants with this work. These group(s) will forward recommendations for the Planning Commission and the City Council to consider. It also is important to get involved with other long range planning activities. Some examples follow:

- **Area Plans:**

Specific land use policies and map changes are created for select areas of the City and/or the Urban Growth Boundary. Significant involvement from local residents and other interested citizens is encouraged to identify land use alternatives and to make recommendations to the City's decision makers. Some examples include the West Corvallis-North Philomath Plan and the South Corvallis Plan, both of which set policies for the largely undeveloped areas of the Urban Growth Boundary in West and South Corvallis. The recommendations from these planning efforts were incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan in 1998.

- **Topic-Specific Plans:**

In response to State mandates and/or City Council goals, the City may initiate other long range planning efforts that are organized around specific subjects. Some examples include plans for transportation, water and sewer facilities, downtown parking, Madison Avenue streetscape/beautification, and drainage. Again, citizen advisory committees typically are created to guide these plans.

- **Inventories:**

Sometimes more information is needed to inform the City's regulatory decisions. For example, the Comprehensive Plan contains policies that are intended to protect significant natural resources, such as wetlands, from development. The Plan directs the City to undertake local inventories to identify what resources should be protected. Citizens can help establish the criteria that are used for these studies.



RESOURCE

CORVALLIS 2020 VISION STATEMENT:

The City sponsored "visioning" efforts before the Comprehensive Plan was first adopted and later revised. These efforts allow citizens to decide what they want the community to look like in the future. The vision provides direction for those working on major planning efforts, especially Comprehensive Plan updates. The most recent visioning effort resulted in "The Corvallis 2020 Vision Statement." Relevant excerpts from the 2020 Vision Statement are provided at the beginning of each section of the Comprehensive Plan.

PART III: STATEWIDE CONTEXT FOR LOCAL PLANNING DECISIONS

"There is a shameless threat to our environment and to the whole quality of life-unfettered despoiling of the land. Sagebrush subdivisions, coastal 'condomania,' and the ravenous rampage of suburbia in the Willamette Valley all threaten to mock Oregon's status as the environmental model for the nation. We are dismayed that we have not stopped misuse of the land, our most valuable finite natural resource.

We are in dire need of a state land-use policy, new subdivision laws, and new standards for planning and zoning by cities and counties. The interests of Oregon for today and in the future must be protected from grasping wastrels of the land. We must respect another truism: That unlimited and unregulated growth leads inexorably to a lowered quality of life."

—Governor Tom McCall's opening address to the 1973 Legislative Assembly



Corvallis' land use programs and procedures reflect the community's response to State land use planning mandates. Oregon's statewide planning program was adopted by the Oregon Legislature in 1973, under the leadership of Governor Tom McCall. Oregon was the first state to develop a statewide framework for land use planning and Oregon's program continues to be seen by many as a model for other states. Generally, the program is intended to:

- Conserve farm land, forest land, coastal resources, and other important natural resources;
- Encourage efficient development;
- Coordinate planning activities of local governments and state and federal agencies;
- Enhance the State's economy; and
- Reduce public costs that result from poorly planned development.



The program is administered by the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC), a seven-member body appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. One of LCDC's roles is to approve (or "acknowledge") local comprehensive plans. Staff in the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) implement LCDC's decisions and administer other parts of the State's land use laws.

Oregon Land Use Planning Accomplishments

Here are a few indicators of the program's accomplishments of the Oregon land use planning program:

- **Local plans in place throughout Oregon.** By 1985, all 276 cities and counties in Oregon had State-approved comprehensive plans. These plans must be consistent with 19 statewide planning goals, described below.
- **Protection of farm and forest land.** Oregon has adopted statewide zoning for 16 million acres of farmland and 10 million acres of forest land. In contrast, land allocated for urbanization and rural residential development totals 1.6 million acres. In the Willamette Valley between 1987 and 1999, only 4,100 acres out of 2 million acres in farm zones were rezoned for urban or rural development (less than 1%).
- **Limits to suburban sprawl through urban growth boundaries.** All 240 cities in Oregon have an Urban Growth Boundary. The Portland metropolitan UGB encompasses 24 cities and parts of three counties. Urban growth boundaries contain sprawl and protect farm and forest lands outside the boundaries. They also contribute to a sense of place as cities are geographically distinct from one another.
- **Efficient use of public investments.** Studies show that it is more efficient to serve land with public infrastructure such as water and roads in a focused area (defined by UGBs) than to provide such services to a sprawling development pattern.
- **Promotion of affordable housing.** Affordable housing choices are facilitated through increased land use densities within cities, smaller minimum lot sizes, and a range of housing types, including manufactured homes.
- **Promotion of transportation alternatives.** All cities are required to have transportation plans that reduce dependence on automobiles.
- **Protection of natural resources.** Local governments are required to identify significant natural resources and provide for their protection.
- **Certainty for developers.** State law requires cities to make decisions on land use applications within 120 days. Cities are required to develop clear and objective land use regulations.
- **Procedural standards for land use decisions.** Local decision making processes must meet minimum state standards. Citizen participation in land use planning and inter-governmental coordination is required.



Oregon Statewide Land Use Planning Goals



Planning for People:

Goal 1 – Citizen Involvement

Calls for “the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.” It requires each City and County to have a citizen involvement program with six components specified in the goal. It also requires local governments to have a Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI) to monitor and encourage public participation in planning.



Goal 2 – Land Use Planning

Outlines the basic procedures of Oregon’s Statewide planning program. It says that land use decisions are to be made in accordance with a Comprehensive Plan, and that suitable “implementation ordinances” to put the Plan’s policies into effect must be adopted. It requires that plans be based on “factual information”; that local plans and ordinances be coordinated with those of other jurisdictions and agencies; and that plans be reviewed periodically and amended as needed. Goal 2 also contains standards for taking exceptions to Statewide Planning Goals and Guidelines. An exception may be taken when a Statewide Planning Goal cannot or should not be applied to a particular area or situation.

Saving Farm and Forest Lands:

Goal 3 – Agricultural Lands

Defines “agricultural lands.” It then requires counties to inventory such lands and to “preserve and maintain” them through exclusive farm use (EFU) zoning (per Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 215).

Goal 4 – Forest Lands

Defines “forest lands” and requires counties to inventory them and adopt policies and ordinances that will “conserve forest lands for forest uses.”



Managing Urban Growth:

Goal 9 – Economic Development

Calls for diversification and improvement of the economy. It asks communities to inventory commercial and industrial lands, project future needs for such lands, and plan and zone enough land to meet those needs.

Goal 10 – Housing

Specifies that each city must plan for and accommodate needed housing types (typically, multi-family and manufactured housing). It requires each city to inventory its buildable residential lands, project future needs for such lands, and plan and zone enough buildable land to meet those needs. It also prohibits local plans from discriminating against needed housing types.

Goal 11 – Public Facilities and Services

Calls for efficient planning of public services such as sewers, water, law enforcement, and fire protection. The Goal's central concept is that public services should be planned in accordance with a community's needs and capacities rather than be forced to respond to development as it occurs.

Goal 12 – Transportation

Aims to provide "a safe, convenient and economic transportation system." It asks for communities to address the needs of the "transportation disadvantaged."

Goal 14 – Urbanization

Requires all cities to estimate future growth and needs for land and then plan and zone enough land to meet those needs. It calls for each city to establish an "Urban Growth Boundary" (UGB) to "identify and separate urbanizable land from rural land." It specifies seven factors that must be considered in drawing up a UGB. It also lists four criteria to be applied when undeveloped land within a UGB is to be converted to urban uses.





Protecting Natural Resources:

Goal 5 – Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Open Spaces

Encompasses twelve different types of resources, including wildlife habitats, mineral resources, wetlands, and waterways. It establishes a process through which resources must be inventoried and evaluated. If a resource or site is found to be important, the local government has three policy choices: to preserve the resource, to allow the proposed uses that conflict with it, or to establish some sort of a balance between the resource and those uses that would conflict with it.

Goal 6 – Air, Water, and Land Resources Quality

Requires local comprehensive plans and implementing measures to be consistent with state and federal regulations on matters such as ground water pollution.

Goal 7 – Areas Subject to Natural Disasters and Hazards

Addresses development in places subject to natural hazards such as floods or landslides. It requires that jurisdictions apply “appropriate safeguards” (flood plain zoning, for example) when planning for development there.

Goal 8 – Recreational Needs

Calls for each community to evaluate its areas and facilities for recreation and develop plans to address the projected demand for them. It also sets forth detailed standards for expedited siting of destination resorts.

Goal 13 – Energy Conservation

Declares that “land and uses developed on the land shall be managed and controlled so as to maximize the conservation of all forms of energy, based upon sound economic principles.”

Goal 15 – Willamette River Greenway

Sets forth procedures for administering the 300 miles of greenway that protect the Willamette River.

Conserving Oregon’s Coastlands:

Goal 16 – Estuarine Resources, Goal 17 – Coastal Shorelands, Goal 18 – Beaches and Dunes, Goal 19 – Ocean Resources

Address resources not found in the Corvallis Urban Growth Boundary; therefore, the City’s Comprehensive Plan does not address these Goals.

Glossary of Terms

Appeal – A legal proceeding in which a decision by one authority is reviewed by another, usually as a result of a challenge by an aggrieved person.

Applicant – A person who submits an application for a development permit as required by the City.

Area Plan – An official document with long-range planning recommendations for a specific area of the City or Urban Growth Boundary. Examples include the South Corvallis Area Plan and the West Corvallis – North Philomath Area Plan. Area Plans usually are adopted into the Comprehensive Plan. See also Master Plan.

Codes, Covenants, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) – Private party restrictions on property in some subdivisions. CC&Rs typically are enforced by homeowner associations.

Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI) – A nine-member volunteer advisory committee which helps facilitate citizen involvement in land use planning.

Comprehensive Plan – A long range guide for the growth and development of a community that includes background analysis and policies. The Plan must comply with State land use planning goals and must be approved by the Land Conservation and Development Commission.

Comprehensive Plan Map – A component of the Comprehensive Plan, this map shows land uses allowed for land within an Urban Growth Boundary.

Criteria/Review Criteria – A basis for making a decision. Specific criteria apply to different land use decisions.

Decision Maker – The individual or body that is authorized to make a decision. As used in this guide, refers to those who make decisions about land use and development proposals.

Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) – A State organization which provides staff support to the Land Conservation and Development Commission. DLCD staff review local land use policies and regulations to ensure they conform with State laws.

Development Standards – Specific requirements in the City's Land Development Code to which develop-

ment must conform. Examples include minimum lot size requirements, street widths, and building height limitations.

Ex Parte Contact – Any contact outside of a public hearing in a land use case by a member of the decision making body and someone wishing to directly or indirectly influence the outcome of the case. Such contact must be declared.

Findings – Statements of conclusions reached after the examination or investigation of the facts. The City Council may adopt formal findings to document the basis for a land use decision.

Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) – A seven-member State commission that oversees Oregon's land use planning program. See also Department of Land Conservation and Development.

Land Development Code – A set of ordinances and regulations that implement the policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan. See also Zoning Ordinance.

Land Development Code Map – A map that shows the locations of land use zones in the City. See also Zoning Map.

Land Development Hearings Board – A three-member subcommittee of the Planning Commission which is authorized to review certain land use cases and appeals of staff decisions.

Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) – A three-member State board which hears and decides appeals of local land use decisions.

Land Use Designation – A category of land use. Usually refers to land uses defined in the Comprehensive Plan and shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map. Also refers to land uses defined in the Land Development Code and shown on the Zoning Map.

Legislative/Legislative Decision – Involves the creation or amendment of policy and, as such, is characteristic of actions by the City Council. Ex parte contact requirements are not applicable to legislative hearings. See also Quasi-Judicial.

Master Plan – An official document with long-range planning recommendations for a specific subject area, such as stormwater and transportation. Master plans usually are adopted into the Comprehensive Plan.

Notice of Disposition – A written notice that describes the action of a decision making body or City staff regarding a development proposal. The notice also describes appeal procedures.

Outright Permitted Use – A use of land that is not subject to discretionary review by the City. An example is a single family detached residence in a residential zone.

Planning Commission – A nine-member volunteer advisory board appointed by the City Council which considers land use policy issues. The Planning Commission also holds public hearings and makes decisions regarding specific land use requests.

Prenotification – An announcement from the City which describes a land use request that will be reviewed at a public hearing. The prenotification is sent to neighborhood association contacts and other organizations on file at the time that an application is determined to be complete. The prenotification is available before the public notice. See also Public Notice.

Public Hearing – As used in this guide, a formal legal proceeding before the Planning Commission, Land Development Hearings Board, or City Council at which the public is invited to testify, and a land use decision is made. See also Legislative and Quasi-Judicial.

Public Notice – A legal announcement from the City which describes a proposed action by the City and how interested members of the public can participate in that action.

Quasi-Judicial/Quasi-Judicial Decision – Similar to a court proceeding. The quasi-judicial process is characteristic of most Planning Commission and Land Development Hearings Board hearings. Quasi-judicial land use decisions involve specific properties as opposed to legislative decisions that address policy matters that affect properties Citywide. Decisions makers are expected to avoid outside discussion of the proposal under consideration and ex parte contacts must be declared. See also Legislative.

Rebuttal – Testimony at a public hearing following initial testimony that is limited in scope to issues raised during the public hearing. See also Sur-rebuttal.

Setbacks – A minimum allowable area from a given reference point, usually a property line, to a building face or structure. For example, a 25 foot front yard setback is the area within the first 25 feet of the front property line. Development restrictions apply to setback areas under the City's Land Development Code.

Staff Report – A professional evaluation of a land use application relative to applicable adopted City codes and policies. Staff reports are prepared for all cases that go to a public hearing. The staff report is prepared by City staff and is available one week before a public hearing.

Standing – An individual or group who are entitled to receive notification of a pending land use case, to receive notice of a decision, or to file an appeal of a decision.

Statewide Planning Goals and Guidelines – Statewide planning standards adopted by the Land Conservation and Development Commission. Local planning must be consistent with these adopted goals and guidelines.

Sur-rebuttal – Testimony at a public hearing that follows rebuttal testimony and is limited in scope to the issues raised in rebuttal testimony. See also Rebuttal.

Testimony – Formal statements presented prior to, at, or during a public hearing before an official body decides an issue or a land use case. Testimony may be presented orally or in writing prior to the close of a public hearing.

Urban Fringe/Urban Fringe Area – The area of land that is outside the City limits but inside the Urban Growth Boundary.

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) – A boundary separating urban from rural land. Land within the Urban Growth Boundary is planned for future urban development.

Zoning/Zoning Ordinance – A system of grouping similar or compatible land uses into geographic areas called "zones." The City ordinances governing these land uses is called the Land Development Code or the Zoning Ordinance.

Zoning Map – A map that shows the locations of land use zones in the City. The Zoning Map must be consistent the Comprehensive Plan Map.

"Where Can I Go For Further Help?" - Resource List

CITY OF CORVALLIS RESOURCES – DOCUMENTS

Corvallis Land Development Code and Map

www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/zoning.html

Corvallis' zoning regulations and zoning map. Also available in the City's Planning Division and in the reference section of Downtown Public Library.

Corvallis Comprehensive Plan and Map

www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/pl/compplan.html

Contains land use policies for the Corvallis City Limits/Urban Growth Boundary. The Comprehensive Plan Map shows land use categories for the Corvallis Urban Growth Boundary. Also available in the City's Planning Division and in the reference section of Downtown Public Library.

2020 Vision Statement

www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/2020vis.html

Describes what Corvallis citizens want the community to look like in the year 2020. This document informed revisions to the Comprehensive Plan that were adopted in 1998. Full-color copies are available for free from the City's Planning Division. A text-only version is on the City's web site.

Citizen Involvement Publications

www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/pl/ccipublications.html

Publications prepared by the Committee for Citizen Involvement include:

- Corvallis Land Use Decisions: Tips for Providing Effective Testimony
- Participating in Corvallis Land Use Decisions
- A Land Use Applicant's Toolkit for Citizen Participation
- A Citizen's Guide to Land Use Planning

CITY OF CORVALLIS RESOURCES – ORGANIZATIONS

Corvallis Community Development Dept.

www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/cdhome.html

P.O. Box 1083
Corvallis, OR 97339
Located in City Hall, 501 SW Madison
(intersection of 5th Street and Madison Avenue)

Planning Division, (541) 766-6908,

planning@ci.corvallis.or.us

Development Services Division, (541) 766-6929,

development.services@ci.corvallis.or.us

Housing Division, (541) 766-6944,

housing@ci.corvallis.or.us

Administration Division, (541) 766-6981,

community.development@ci.corvallis.or.us

Corvallis Committee for Citizen Involvement

www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/pl/ci.html

The Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI) helps facilitate citizen involvement in all phases of land use planning and decision making.

Meetings:

The CCI meets monthly. Most meetings take place in the Downtown Public Library (645 NW Monroe Avenue). Contact the City's Planning Division for more information.

Corvallis Neighborhood Associations and Neighborhood Empowerment Grants

The Community Development Department sends land use public notices and other information to recognized Corvallis neighborhood associations. Neighborhood associations also are eligible to apply for grants through the City's neighborhood empowerment program. Contact the Community Development Department for more information.

Corvallis Planning Commission

www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/pl/pc.html

The Planning Commission decides on certain land use applications. Commissioners also set new land use policies through their work on long range planning efforts and other advisory committees. Three Planning Commissioners are appointed to the Land Development Hearings Board which reviews certain zoning map changes and appeals of staff decisions.

Meetings:

Meetings usually occur on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM in the Downtown Fire Station (400 NW Harrison Boulevard). Other meetings are scheduled as needed. Staff reports for Planning Commission public hearings are available one week prior to the public hearing date. Contact the City's Planning Division for more information.

Corvallis Mayor & City Council

www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cmo/mayrcncl.html

The Mayor and City Council set policy for the City of Corvallis. Mayor and Council decisions are implemented by the City Manager and City staff. The City Council also decides on certain land use applications.

Meetings:

Meetings usually occur on the first and third Mondays of the month, at 12:00 PM and again at 7:00 PM in the Downtown Fire Station. Contact the City Manager's Office at (541) 766-6901 for more information.

Corvallis Historic Preservation Advisory Board

www.ci.corvallis.or.us/historic/inventory/histinv.html
(Corvallis inventoried historic properties)

The Historic Preservation Advisory Board (HPAB) reviews applications of proposed alterations to historic structures. HPAB also reviews proposed changes to the local and/or national Historic Register listings, undertakes inventories of historic resources, and makes recommendations regarding the protection of those resources.

Meetings:

Meetings usually occur on the second Monday of the month at 5:00 PM. Other meetings are scheduled as needed. Contact the City's Planning Division for more information.

Corvallis Neighborhood Liaison & Ombudsperson

www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cpd

The City's Neighborhood Liaison can help you solve problems with a neighbor, facilitate a neighborhood discussion, and refer you to mediation services to resolve neighbor disputes. The City's Ombudsperson provides assistance regarding questions of unlawful discrimination. Both services are available through the City's Police Department at (541) 766-6772.

STATE RESOURCES

Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission

www.lcd.state.or.us/lcdc.html

Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development

www.lcd.state.or.us

Local planning must conform with statewide planning requirements. The Oregon statewide planning program is administered by the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) and implemented by staff in the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD).

Statewide Planning Program Brochure

www.lcd.state.or.us/fastpdfs/brochure.pdf

Other Publications

www.lcd.state.or.us/publicat.html

Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee

www.lcd.state.or.us/lcdc.html

The Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee (CIAC) advises the Land Conservation and Development Commission and local governments on matters pertaining to citizen involvement.

Land Use Board of Appeals

luba.state.or.us

The Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) reviews appeals of local land use decisions.

OTHER RESOURCES

American Planning Association

National Organization

www.planning.org

122 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1600
1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Chicago, IL 60603
Washington, DC 20036
(312) 431-9100
(202) 872-0611

Oregon Chapter

www.oregonapa.org

P.O. Box 8554
Portland OR 97207-8554
(503) 650-8558

The American Planning Association is organized to advance the art and science of planning and to foster the activity of planning — physical, economic, and social — at the local, regional, state, and national levels.

Cyburbia – Internet Resources for the Built Environment

www.cyburbia.org

This web site contains a large directory of planning-related internet resources.

League of Women Voters

National Organization

www.lwv.org

1730 M Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036-4508
(202) 429-1965

Corvallis Chapter

www.corvallis.or.us

P.O. Box 1679
Corvallis, OR 97339-1679
(541) 758 - 2922

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Open Oregon

www.open-oregon.com

11575 SW Pacific Highway, Suite 196
Portland, OR 97223
(503) 796-3991

Open Oregon is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting public access to public records and meetings. A reference guide to Oregon's public meeting laws and other materials are available.

Postscript - the Future of Citizen Participation in Planning?



The Corvallis Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI) is a volunteer citizen advisory committee with a mandate to help facilitate citizen involvement in the city's land use planning and decision making. One of the Committee's primary goals is to help design planning processes that involve citizens early and in a meaningful way. The Committee also evaluates the City's programs and procedures used to promote citizen involvement in planning and makes recommendations regarding how these programs and procedures can be improved.

The CCI recognizes that the legal context and timeframes for land use planning decisions — particularly for the review of applications through a public hearing process — present challenges for those wishing to participate. Citizens typically receive information about a project proposal late in the design cycle. To be considered by the City's decision makers, testimony must relate to specific land use review criteria. However, these criteria may not address all concerns or questions that citizens may have about a project. The public hearing itself is a formal, legal proceeding. Citizens may feel a desire to discuss a project or raise land use-related questions in a less formal setting.

This is one reason why the CCI encourages applicants to reach out to neighbors and other interested citizens early in the process — ideally before the application is submitted — so that applicants can hear from the public as they prepare or finalize their plans.

This handbook provides information about existing decision making processes and describes the many ways in which citizens can get involved in land use planning. Particular emphasis is placed on participating in long range planning efforts that set the stage for future decisions. By design, long range planning efforts provide many opportunities for citizens to participate, often in less formal settings than land use hearings.

To a large extent, the formal, legal framework for local land use decisions reflects State law. The Committee for Citizen Involvement would like to explore new opportunities for citizens to engage in dialogues about



land use issues, recognizing these legal constraints. Engaging in dialogues means uncovering win-win options. Some attributes of dialogue are:

- Assuming that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can understand problems and craft solutions;
- Exploring common ground in which participants collaboratively work together toward common understanding;
- Revealing assumptions for reevaluation and understanding that another's thinking can improve on one's own;
- Searching for strengths and value in other's positions and listening to understand, find meaning, and agreement; and
- Discovering new options without seeking premature closure.

Options for Pursuing Land Use Dialogues

The City of Corvallis does not have an established system or department to support land use dialogues. However, there are several national programs that can serve as models for such dialogues, such as National Issues Forums, Study Circles, and Great Decisions. The CCI intends to gather information about these programs and how they may be applied in Corvallis.

The Committee for Citizen Involvement thanks you for reading this handbook and encourages you to contact us with your ideas for improving the community's land use programs and procedures.



RESOURCE

National Programs Promoting Community Dialogues

- National Issues Forum
<http://www.nifi.org>

National Issues Forums is a nationwide network of educational and community organizations that deliberate about nation-wide issues. Deliberative forums provide a way for citizens to exchange ideas and experiences with one another, and make more thoughtful and informed decisions.

- Study Circles Resource Center
<http://www.studycircles.org>

Study circles provide a simple way to involve community members in dialogue and action on important social and political issues.

- Great Decisions
<http://www.fpa.org>

Great Decisions discussion groups meet all over the United States each year to discuss foreign policy issues.

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